

A
THREE-FOLD CORD;

OR,

THE UNITED TESTIMONIES

OF

British Ladies, Ministers of the Gospel,
and Medical Men,

IN FAVOUR OF THE TOTAL AND IMMEDIATE

REPEAL

OF THE

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS

Affecting the Women (not Cattle) of Great Britain and Ireland.

"ADD TO YOUR FAITH VIRTUE."—2 Pet. i. 5.

LONDON:

WILLIAM TWEEDIE, 337, STRAND.

—
1870.

Price Twopence.]

LADIES' TESTIMONY.

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A THREE-FOLD CORD.

Ladies' Testimony.

THE LADIES' NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

FOR THE REPEAL OF THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS.

THERE are two Acts of Parliament—one passed in 1866, the other in 1869—called the Contagious Diseases Acts. These Acts are in force in some of our garrison towns, and in large districts around them. Unlike all other laws for the repression of contagious diseases, to which both men and women are liable, these two apply to women only, men being wholly exempt from their penalties. The law is ostensibly framed for a certain class of women, but in order to reach these, all the women residing within the districts where it is in force are brought under the provisions of the Acts. Any woman can be dragged into court, and required to prove that she is not a common prostitute. The magistrate can condemn her, if a policeman swears only that he “has good cause to believe” her to be one. The accused has to rebut, not positive evidence, but the state of mind of her accuser. When condemned, the sentence is as follows :—To have her person outraged by the periodical inspection of a surgeon, through a period of twelve months ; or, resisting that, to be imprisoned, with or without hard labour—first for a month, next for three months—such imprisonment to be continuously renewed through her whole life unless she submit periodically to the brutal requirements of this law. Women arrested under false accusations have been so terrified at the idea of encountering the public trial necessary to prove their innocence, that they have, under the intimidation

of the police, signed away their good name and their liberty by making what is called a "voluntary submission" to appear periodically for twelve months for surgical examination.* Women who, through dread of imprisonment, have been induced to register themselves as common prostitutes, now pursue their traffic under the sanction of Parliament; and the houses where they congregate, so long as the government surgeons are satisfied with the health of their inmates, enjoy, practically, as complete a protection as a church or a school.

We, the undersigned, enter our solemn protest against these Acts—

1. Because, involving as they do such a momentous change in the legal safeguards hitherto enjoyed by women in common with men, they have been passed, not only without the knowledge of the country, but unknown to Parliament itself; and we hold that neither the representatives of the people nor the press fulfil the duties which are expected of them, when they allow such legislation to take place without the fullest discussion.
2. Because, so far as women are concerned, they remove every guarantee of personal security which the law has established and held sacred, and put their reputation, their freedom, and their persons absolutely in the power of the police.
3. Because the law is bound, in any country professing to give civil liberty to its subjects, to define clearly an offence which it punishes.

* The following is an extract from the evidence given before the Parliamentary Committee:—"Mr. E. K. Parsons, visiting surgeon of the Portsmouth Lock Hospital, was examined by the Committee, and asked (398) whether, if the police by error bring up a really modest woman to the surgeon, mistaking her for a harlot, the woman signs a voluntary paper before the surgeon examines her. He replies: 'Yes, they all sign a voluntary submission, unless sent by order of a magistrate.' The questioner continues (399), 'But a modest woman would decline to sign that paper, would she not?' Reply: 'No; for this reason, the police, believing in the correctness of their own impression (!) say, very well, if you do not sign that, you go to the bench. And then the woman says, in order to avoid that—Well, I do not mind going into a private room and speaking to Mr. Parsons. And she will sign the voluntary submission.' (400.) Question—'Therefore, they (really honest women) sign a voluntary submission, under the fear of being taken before a magistrate?' Reply—'Unquestionably.' Mr. Parsons also says, (370) that the police are very apt to jump to the conclusion, that a woman is a prostitute if they see her out at night."

4. Because it is unjust to punish the sex who are the victims of a vice, and leave unpunished the sex who are the main cause, both of the vice and its dreaded consequences ; and we consider that liability to arrest, forced surgical examination, and where this is resisted, imprisonment with hard labour, to which these Acts subject women, are punishments of the most degrading kind.

5. Because, by such a system, the path of evil is made more easy to our sons, and to the whole of the youth of England ; inasmuch as a moral restraint is withdrawn the moment the State recognises and provides convenience for the practice of a vice which it thereby declares to be necessary and venial.

6. Because these measures are cruel to the women who come under their action—violating the feelings of those whose sense of shame is not wholly lost, and further brutalising even the most abandoned.

7. Because the disease which these Acts seek to remove has never been removed by any such legislation. The advocates of the system have utterly failed to show, by statistics or otherwise, that these regulations have in any case, after several years' trial, and when applied to one sex only, diminished disease, reclaimed the fallen, or improved the general morality of the country. We have, on the contrary, the strongest evidence to show that in Paris and other continental cities, where women have long been outraged by this forced inspection, the public health and morals are worse than at home.

8. Because the conditions of this disease, in the first instance, are moral, not physical. The moral evil through which the disease makes its way separates the case entirely from that of the plague or other scourges, which have been placed under police control or sanitary care. We hold that we are bound, before rushing into the experiment of legalising a revolting vice to try to deal with the causes of the evil, and we dare to believe that with wiser teaching and more capable legislation those causes would not be beyond control.

HARRIET MARTINEAU
Josephine E. Butler
Catherine Hill Burton
Martha Baines
Elizabeth Malleson

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE
Elizabeth Garnett
Eliza L. Oldham
Mary Bennett
Mary Estlin

Mary Merryweather
 Mary Priestman
 Mrs. Trew
 Lydia A. Horton
 Mrs. Thomas Hervey
 Lydia E. Becker
 Agnes M'Laren
 Mary Burton
 Helen Baumgartner
 Elia Barham
 Mary Isabel Garston
 E. C. Griffiths
 Sarah Gibbins
 Ellen Marriott
 Mrs. Whiting
 Lucilla Smith
 Mrs. William
 Mary M'Combie
 Isabella Syde
 Hannah Kay
 Mrs. George Tatham
 Elizabeth Fleming
 Mary Kirby
 Annie M'Combie
 Lydia Sanson
 Flora Ann Ross
 Susan Dick Lauder
 Elizabeth Pease Nichol
 Caroline A. Smedley
 Katherine Thomasson
 Isabella M. S. Tod
 Jane Crosfield
 E. Cobb
 Rebecca Moore
 Maria W. Palmer
 L. Leonard
 Anne F. Ashworth
 M. A. Symonds
 Anna N. Haslam
 Mrs. William Walker
 Mrs. Charles Thomas
 Mrs. Thorpe
 Bridget Draper
 Sarah Dell
 Mary Clodd
 A. A. Catford
 Anne Barber
 Miss Hooper
 Eliza Millward
 Celia Walker

M. B. Crook
 Mary Wills
 Emily Beaumont
 Mrs. Morris Sterling
 E. M. Slovin
 Elizabeth C. Wolstenholme
 Ursula M. Bright
 Katherine E. Backhouse
 Margaret Lucas
 Jane Wigham
 Susan A. Pease
 Catherine Blackburn
 Mary C. Hume-Rothery
 K. E. Malleson
 Lillias S. Ashworth
 Anne Taylor
 Lydia J. Jackson
 Madame Venturi
 Lucy Thomas
 Miss Anthony
 Mary Crudelius
 Mrs. Henry Briscoll
 Eliza Clark
 E. Hannah Ford
 M. A. Temple
 Mrs. W. Ferguson
 Clara Ann Parker
 Sarah Fenton
 Eliza Thomas
 Mary Feast
 Betsey Goodson
 Mrs. J. P. Whitehead
 Caroline H. Ferrell
 Mary Steel
 Mrs. Stewart
 Jane Boyd Henderson
 Mrs. Garden
 Mrs. Major Greig
 Priscilla M'Laren
 Margaret Pennington
 Eliza Wigham
 Mrs. Boucherett
 Anne Eliza Fryer
 M. C. Jevons
 Mary H. Martindale
 Lavinia Solly
 Lydia Wodehouse
 Miss Leonard
 Elizabeth Waters
 Agnes Mayoh

Elizabeth Drummond
 Mary Anne Barton
 M. F. England
 Anna Batt
 Sarah Mayoh Clow
 Margaret Marriott
 Lucy Wilson
 Margaret Stafford
 Mary F. Gough

Eliza Fowes
 Rachel C. Wakefield
 Mrs. Riddle
 Maria Sowarth
 Alice Hargreaves
 Emma Bryant
 Jane Leslie
 Ann M'Combie
 Harriet Brand

A Ladies' Association has been formed for the purpose of obtaining the repeal of these obnoxious Acts. The necessity for such an association becomes more urgent from the fact that a society is already in existence for procuring their extension to the women of the whole kingdom.

We earnestly entreat our countrywomen of every class and party to help us in the difficult and painful task which only a deep sense of duty could have forced us to undertake. We have not entered lightly upon it, nor shall we lightly abandon it, because we believe that in its attainment are involved, not only the personal rights of our sex, but the morality of the nation.

COMMITTEE.

Mrs. REID
 Mrs. NICOL
 Miss E. WOLSTENHOLME

Mrs. JACOB BRIGHT
 Mrs. GEORGE BUTLER.

Hon. Sec.—Mrs. GEORGE BUTLER, 280, South Hill, Park Road, Liverpool.

Treasurer.—Mrs. JACOB BRIGHT, Alderley Edge, Cheshire.

All ladies desirous of joining the Association are requested to sign the above protest, and to return it to the Secretary.

CIRCULAR OF THE LONDON COMMITTEE.

The following is the Circular issued by the London Committee of the "Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts."

WE, whose names are appended, have formed ourselves into a London Committee of the Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, to express the

more emphatically our deep sense of the importance of the question at issue, of the vital moral and political principles involved in it, and of the heavy responsibility laid upon us, as women, to shield from systematised degradation the weakest and most pitiable of our sex, to resist the idea of purchasing even possible immunity from physical disease at the risk of moral health, and to declare our conviction that we must constantly and hopefully seek to remove the *causes* of sexual immorality, and not despairingly admit that such, however prolonged, must be eventually useless.

We do not shut our eyes to the facts reiterated by the medical profession ; but we cannot allow ourselves to be blinded by the panic caused by physical evil, and to tolerate legislation prompted by that panic only.

The Contagious Diseases Acts have been framed and enforced under this dread of disease ; remoter causes of evil have been disregarded ; a standing army, and a long term of military service, have been assumed necessary ; and, from a practical contempt of womanhood, the rights which even prostitutes have over themselves have been set aside with a light and cruel indifference ; resistance to authority given under these Acts is punished ; and the tending of the sick is undertaken, out of no immediate compassion for them, but that their companions in vice shall be rendered safer from infection. If such Acts were proved capable of effectually stopping the ravages of disease (actual proof of which is utterly wanting) we should still declare them worthy of our strongest reprobation, as contrary to the spirit of free and equal legislation ; as decreeing oppressive measures, when others less perilous have not been tried ; and indirectly admitting prostitution to be a necessity. We resist this admission with all the strength of our belief in the sanctity of pure and faithful love, and in the progress of the human race.

We admit with contrition that, although the desire to help and reclaim "fallen" women, and to seek and attack the sources of the immorality permeating society, has been latent in the minds and hearts of many of us, we have too long delayed to make the subject one of that vital thought and effort which it deserves to be. This it must become, now that Englishwomen have been roused to put aside personal feeling, and have broken

through the reserve and silence which have too long veiled its terrible importance.

We appeal to the women of London for sympathy, for personal help, and for funds to carry out the work we have now begun in aid of the Association, whose Protest, already well and numerously signed, we enclose with this Address.

LADIES' LONDON COMMITTEE.

Mrs. McLAREN
Mrs. LUCAS
Mrs. WM. HARGREAVES
Mrs. W. T. MALLESON
Mrs. W. B. HODGSON
Mrs. WM. HOWITT

Miss HELEN TAYLOR
Mrs. F. PENNINGTON
Mrs. P. A. TAYLOR, Sen.
Madame VENTURI
Mrs. JACOB BRIGHT
Mrs. FRANK R. MALLESON

Hon. Sec.—Mrs. FRANK R. MALLESON, Camp Cottage, Wimbledon.

Treasurer.—Mrs. LUCAS, 32, Carlton Hill, St John's Wood.

The names of Ladies willing to join the Association should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. FRANK R. MALLESON, Camp Cottage, Wimbledon.

The following Gentlemen have given their Names as supporters of the objects of the Ladies' Association :

Right Rev. the BISHOP OF SALISBURY.

Right Rev. the BISHOP OF LICHFIELD.

Very Rev. the DEAN OF CARLISLE.

Rev. Dr. LIGHTFOOT (Divinity Professor, Cambridge).

Professor SHELDON AMOS.
EDWARD BAINES, Esq., M.P.
EDMOND BEALES, Esq.
JACOB BRIGHT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CHAPMAN, Esq., M.D.
CHARLES DRYSDALE, Esq., M.D.
CHARLES GILPIN, Esq., M.P.
Rev. NEWMAN HALL.
WM. HARGREAVES, Esq.
W. B. HODGSON, Esq., LL.D.
Mr. GEORGE HOWELL.
WM. HOWITT, Esq.
Rev. GEORGE JENNINGS.
Rev. JOHN KENNEDY.

BAXTER LANGLEY, Esq.
WM. T. MALLESON, Esq.
DUNCAN McLAREN, Esq., M.P.
Rev. F. D. MAURICE.
JOHN STUART MILL, Esq.
JOHN MILLER, Esq., M.P.
A. MUNDELLA, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES PHILLIPS, Esq., M.D.,
F.R.G.S.
Dr. ROTH.
Rev. CHARLES STOVELL.
J. J. GARTH WILKINSON, M.D.,
F.R.G.S.
Rev. G. BUTLER

January, 1870.

MRS. JOSEPHINE E. BUTLER'S TESTIMONY.

(Extracted from her Letter to Working Men.)

"THIS law has been in operation in France for many years. We have abundant evidence from that country of the misery of the working classes there, under its influence. The foreign correspondent of the *Medical Times and Gazette* stated a few weeks ago that so long as parents were allowed to claim their daughters from the infamy of registration the Act had no chance, and that the most eminent authorities were agreed that this right must be abolished. For a mother to win her lost daughter back to her home has ever been considered a sacred right ; but, in order to uphold this system of legislation, it is said that fathers and mothers must be refused the power of redeeming their children from the vilest slavery on earth. There are thousands of honest working girls and women in England whose only chance of health is to get air and exercise in the evening after work is over. Of this chance the shameful law we deprecate will deprive them.

"The law is immoral when broadly considered, in its influence on all classes. It throws the door of temptation more widely open to men, and tends to deaden the conscience of the young about good and evil ; because, as you will perceive, the moral restraint which existed before, is taken away the moment the Government recognises by such a law the necessity of a vice which it thereby pronounces to be a light and excusable offence : a vice which degrades the man who practises it, and which is *death* of both body and soul to the women who are the victims of it. This law gives a direct advantage to vicious men. It writes, practically, on every brothel—'Here are none but harlots warranted by us to be sound ; convenience is now provided for you : you may enter here, and sin, without fear for yourself or your progeny.' But this promise is *delusive* : for success does not attend such immoral legislation. In no country where this law has been applied to one sex only has the disease which it aims at stamping out been diminished by it. Abundant statistics prove exactly the contrary. The question may be discussed in the next Session of Parliament, whether this law shall be applied to the women of the whole kingdom.

Seeing then the tremendous consequences, moral, social, and political, which must attend the success of such a measure, we believe that you will not wonder that we ladies have ventured to shake off the reserve which we usually maintain, and to appeal for help to those whom we believe will prove to be our truest friends in this crisis—the working-men of England. To you we appeal, for on you and on your families this hateful law will fall the most directly and heavily. Will you consent that your wives and daughters shall be henceforward completely at the mercy of police spies and informers, in order that richer men may sin with less risk to themselves? We believe that when once you are made aware of the true nature of this law, your sense of justice towards the weak, your preference for virtuous domestic life over promiscuous harlotry, and your respect for constitutional rights and personal freedom, will rouse you to such a course of action as will make it practically impossible for a Parliament in which you are fairly represented, to carry such a law further than it has been carried,—nay, more, it will make it impossible for it to remain unrepealed in those districts where it is now in force.

“There has been great secrecy and manœuvring in the carrying out, so far, of this measure. Many members of the House of Commons even were entirely ignorant, until lately, of what was done last session. The Press has been silent, except in one or two instances, in which it has taken the side of the promoters of this law. I give you an extract from the letter of a member of Parliament, whose name, if I were free to mention it, would inspire every working-man with respect. He writes thus:—‘I never cease to reproach myself with my absence from the House when this Act was extended. Jaded and ill with the frightful overwork of the session, I left the house a few days before it closed, and when all new legislation was supposed to be at an end. I never heard of the Bill, or saw it, till it was law; and I believe that is the state of the case with nineteen-twentieths of the members of the legislature.’

“But secrecy is at an end. It remains for you, fellow-countrymen, to give your honest verdict on this matter. We appeal to you with great confidence.

“280, SOUTH HILL, PARK ROAD,
“LIVERPOOL, December, 1869.”

Ministers of the Gospel.

THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD'S TESTIMONY.

BISHOP SELWYN writes as follows to the Hon. Secretary of the Ladies' Committee :—

“PALACE, LICHFIELD.

“I am quite willing to assist in procuring the repeal of these odious Acts.

“I entirely agree with all who protest against the ungodly doctrine of one code of morality for a man and another for a woman—impunity to the tempter and punishment to the victim !

“Feb. 16th, 1870.”

BISHOP ALFORD'S TESTIMONY.*

OF another Colonial Ordinance (meaning the Contagious Diseases Act some time in operation in his Diocese), which has reference to the breach of the Seventh Commandment, I feel bound, after careful and repeated consideration, to speak in terms of the strongest disapproval, believing it to be not *suppressive* of, but *conducive to vice* ! The Act has for its obvious and direct result the public regulation,—nay, however unintentionally, as it appears to me, the easy, safe, respectable indulgence of a “deadly sin.”

God hath said, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” God hath said, “Flee fornication,” 1 Cor. vi. 18. God hath said, “Fornicators shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” 1 Cor. vi. 9. God hath expressly warned us, “Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge,” Heb. xiii. 4. And in His wisdom and

* Extract from a charge delivered in the Cathedral Church of St. John, Victoria, Hongkong, February 2nd, 1869, by the Right Rev. Charles Richard Alford, D.D., Lord Bishop of Victoria.

mercy towards fallen man God has been pleased to connect the commission of the sin, as a natural result, with shame, disease, pain, and even death. There are many who would be guilty of the sin, could they with certainty escape the threatened penalty. They would crowd the harlots' houses, could they hope to escape the lurking pestilence! Legislation steps forward: and, instead of condemning and suppressing the vice, presumes rather to make the commission of a "deadly sin" almost respectable.

* * * It is a mistaken policy to prune the upas tree. Dig it up and destroy it! It is replied:—It cannot be done; therefore, let the tree grow and bear fruit; and as regards temporal consequences, regulate them; as regards the eternal consequences, ignore the judgment day and the eternity beyond!

But, I ask, is sin a necessity? Has God given an express command to man in every age and under every clime; and has He been pleased to threaten severest penalty upon its transgression, and yet is transgression a necessity? Is not this to impeach the wisdom, and goodness, and justice of our Maker?

Brethren! Sin is no necessity on the part of man in any clime or under any circumstances. Sin need have "dominion" over none of us, for we are "under grace." (Read Rom. vi. 12, 23). Let our soldiers and sailors, let our men of business, and their *employés*, be brought by an adequate and faithful Ministry of the Gospel, under the influence of God's omnipotent grace, and then, though doubtless many will sin on still, and continue to do so till the day comes when "the sinners shall be rooted out," we believe the disease of which we read, will cease; not by unnatural and disgusting provisions to protect us from pestilence, but by the mitigation of crime and the mending of morals.

Let men call this "theory" if they will; it is the theory of Divine revelation, and it has proved effectual wherever tried. It availed at Corinth, one of the most licentious of cities in St. Paul's day. (Read 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11.) Divine Grace availed at Corinth, at Ephesus, and at Rome in the Apostolic days, and has availed wherever sought, all over the world ever since. It will avail in this age, for it is God's own remedy against the sin of man, and none other is adequate to meet the case.

This, indeed, is not "theory," but fact; or Bible narrative, and Church history, and Christian experience are but a delusion. Nor can its efficacy ever fail; for the promise is unrevoked, and never can be broken, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

In another part of his charge the Bishop said:—"Vice may never be legalized! Crime may never be regulated! To legalize vice and to regulate crime is to undermine the very foundations of public morality. It is plainly contrary to every principle of wise legislation and sound government."

DEAN OF CARLISLE'S TESTIMONY.

The Very Rev. the Dean of Carlisle writes—

"My name is at the service of your Association; and if I had a hundred names they should be yours, could they assist in wiping out the foulest blot that ever stained the annals of British legislation!

"Reluctant to investigate the loathsome evidence necessary to enable me to arrive at a just conclusion on this painful subject, I have, perhaps, neglected it too long. But I am now only too sadly persuaded that (it may be with not unworthy motives) the promoters of these Acts have been guilty of a breach of the fundamental principles of British liberty, and of disturbing the purest fountains of female virtue.

"FRANCIS CLOSE,

"Dean of Carlisle."

"DEANERY, CARLISLE;
"March 1, 1870."

DR. GUTHRIE'S TESTIMONY.

Dr. Guthrie, in a pamphlet on the subject, after discussing the low state of morality and the decay of domestic happiness abroad, says:—

"Such, may I seize the opportunity to remark, will be the unhappy condition of our country, should they succeed who are insidiously attempting to get a bill passed through Parlia-

ment for the purpose of introducing amongst us one of the worst continental institutions. A false delicacy would avoid the subject ; but the morals of our country are too precious to be sacrificed to *that*. Both the greatness and imminence of the danger require that a warning should be sounded loud and plain. It is well known that the *social evil*, as it is called, is conducted in France and elsewhere on the Continent, under the supervision, and, in a sense, with the sanction of the State. With step as quiet and as deadly as a tiger's, this system has already crept into some of our large garrison towns and Government Naval ports. With soldiers doomed to a life of *ennui* and comparative idleness, and to all but universal celibacy, 'a standing army,' under our present arrangements, is, and must be, another name for 'a standing immorality.' To inflict such wrongs on those who defend its shores is a shame and sin to any country ; but especially to one so wealthy as this. The proper remedy for these evils is to engage our soldiers in industrial employment, and engraft on the army marriage, and the domestic system. These are God's remedies and should be ours. But it is not to a prophet of the Lord and the waters of Jordan that the leper here is sent for healing. No. To cure the physical evils which attend, and the enormous waste of money which is incurred by, the vices of our army and navy, we — miserable reformers — are introducing a system whose monstrous recommendation is, that it makes vice *safe and cheap*. These be thy gods, O Israel !

"We have studied the matter, and are prepared to prove by facts, which, as Burns says, '*are chiefs that wunna ding*,' that the immorality in question, with all its attendant physical and moral evils, is nowhere more rampant, or so rampant, as in those very countries where this system of supervising and, in effect, of licensing vice has been established. There the vice flourishes, like a green bay-tree, or rather a upas tree—under the protection of the police and patronage of the State. The dogged determination which some are showing, and the quiet, stealthy, insidious ways they are taking, to introduce this system make our danger imminent. It is high time the Churches, the Heaven-appointed guardians of public morals, were doing their duty. Let their ministers not be dumb dogs that cannot bark. Watchmen on the walls of Zion, they have got the trumpet to

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"*Dean of Carlisle.*

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"*March 1, 1870.*"

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sound. Let them put it to their lips ; and let those who have the elective franchise deal with their representatives. They may do so as effectually, and with more reason than good Queen Bess, when she told the bishops that, if they did not do her bidding, she would unfrock them. The people are sleeping ; but we have the best reason to know that the enemy is awake—not sleeping, but sapping and mining. May God rouse the country to its duty, and raise up leaders in this crisis, like the men of Issachar who ‘hath understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do !’ ”

REV. W. ARTHUR'S TESTIMONY.

(President of the Wesleyan Theological College, Belfast.)

“I hereby affirm, after years of study of this question, both at home and *in many of the chief cities of the Continent*, after careful acquaintance with every page of the exhaustive work of Duchatelet, that I do not believe the amount of disease and physical suffering resulting from unchastity, *is increased by legalising the trade of the prostitute !*

“Wherever the system of inspection exists abroad, it is impossible to bring all under it. There are those who are too respectable to submit to this last ‘*brand*’ of weekly inspection, but who habitually take the risks of the streets. These propagate disease, and so does a certain per-centage of registered women ; and from the two classes the malady is so far diffused in France, that evidence of its prevalence, in very offensive forms, is often thrust before the public view.

“The tendency of such a system is to *promote* unchastity generally, and every one will agree that a law which promotes unchastity *must spread disease, physical suffering, and social disorder !* Into what a position does it bend the lordly form of Law ! that of licensing the self-vendor and certifying her to the purchaser as fit for use ! It is impossible to say that the Law can stoop to this without lowering the public sense of modesty, the sacredness of woman, and the dignity of man ! The certificate given to the prostitute is not like the ticket-of-leave given to the convict, which permits him to range on condition

that he does not return to his evil courses. On the contrary, it is delivered as her credential in returning, and thus makes the law a patron and protector of her trade !

"The certified Parisian prostitute good-humouredly protests that she is in just the same relation to society and to the State as the butcher or the baker. Their trade is lawful ; so is hers. They are not allowed to sell diseased food ; she is under a similar condition ! But just as much as they is she recognised. With this mental drug her conscience is set at rest ; and when to this is added the periodical bodily degradation of inspection, she is turned into the aptest instrument for tempting man or woman to the vile house ; the one under the assurance of her sound health, the other with arguments as to the legality or safety of her profession. Altogether she becomes baser and more dangerous to society than if left as a conscious offender against Divine and human law.

"How greatly this state of things adds to the temptation of a poor girl, pushed by poverty, or by the result of seduction, to cast herself away ! How much it lessens, in the eye of all the lower classes of women, the danger and disgrace of the last dark step into the street !

"The effect of legalising (or recognising) prostitution upon the moral sentiment of men, is not less bad than in the case of women. There are many offences which the law cannot hinder, with which it never compromises. Theft can find no shelter, but fornication is ministered to with learned care. Men once taught to visit the worst of women, learn to covet and conspire against the best. Though in Paris the numbers of registered prostitutes are great, and those of non-registered ones greater far, yet one third of the births are illegitimate, and alas ! of the marriages, how large a proportion are, on one side or the other, vitiated by infidelity.

"The number of offences against person and life which in our country are traceable to illicit intercourse of the sexes, is appalling. Still more so is the case in France. The instances in which infanticide, suicide, and assassination are the deeds of harlots or their paramours, seducers or their victims, make a total of sin and woe, flowing from one source, which should make any man pause before he shed on that source one ray of respectability.

"In our own country the fact is patent that much of our London prostitution is supplied by French and Belgian women. This proves two things; first, that the number of English women so far fallen as to take to the street is not enough to meet the demand of our immoral men; and secondly, that in the countries of our two nearest neighbours, where they practise this system of inspection, the women are so trained as to supply an export of prostitution! Surely this fact goes strongly against subjecting our own women to the educational influences of such an institution.

"Does it not also point to the quarter in which to turn the eye of the police, and apply the disgusting punishment of inspection? namely, not to the purchased, but to the purchaser! not to the harlots, but to the men whose true name in England is so low that we do not pronounce it. Propose that every man seen to enter houses of ill-fame shall be inspected; that if found diseased he shall be sent to hospital, and not let loose on society till well. Then no abomination will be licensed, none will be hardened in crime, no additional snare will be set in the way of the young; and in the case of many a lad there will be added one additional check which, in the day of temptation, would prevent him for the first time crossing the accursed threshold which is the way to death!

"The occasion alleged for this law is ominous. We are, forsooth, to license immoral commerce in every town, in the vain hope of saving a small per-centage of soldiers from disease.* The loads laid by war on the back of humanity are many and sore; but of them all in modern times none is so odious as the corrupting influence of standing armies. If for our English army we are now to pay the tax of a demoralizing recognition of a new class of State servants (*i. e.* prostitutes warranted sound by Government) the conscience of many will groan under the load.

* It is a fact that at every military station in England where this disgusting law has been applied, disease has *increased*, while at one station (Shorncliffe) it has *doubled*! This statement is founded on Parliamentary tables supplied by the *supporters* of the Act. This result, together with the foregoing assertions of the Rev. W. Arthur, prove that the system is not only immoral, degrading, and debasing, but *utterly useless* in accomplishing the mitigation of disease.

"I venture to hope that the Government of England is not to be carried or ruled by the Horse Guards and Admiralty ; and I strongly believe that when this question is fully discussed, the sense of English women and of English men will be so expressed against this measure, that it will never become one of our laws !"

REV. DR. W. H. RULE'S TESTIMONY.

Dr. Rule, for many years Chaplain to the Wesleyans in the Army, writes as follows (under date, Nov. 18th, 1869) to the Secretary of the National Anti-Contagious Diseases Act Association:

"I share with you in horror and loathing of this most demoralizing piece of covert legislation. During my connection with the army, and several years residence at Aldershot, I saw much of both Men and Women to convince me of the value of moral influence for the mitigation of this evil.

"As for the Men, I visited them (so far as they were under my spiritual charge) in hospitals, and found them, for the most part, accessible to all I could say to them from the Word of God, and alive to every appeal to reason and to conscience. I could cite, for example, one remarkable case, of one of the finest Cavalry regiments in the service, almost entirely free, during the last year of their service in that camp, from the disease which they are now *vainly endeavouring to eradicate* by the expedients which the present most exceptionable law provides.

"As for Women, I saw enough of them to ascertain, on the one hand, that a hospital of the sort now provided for prostitutes for the convenience of soldiers, is the very last thing that will tend to reclaim, and is one of the most effectual methods for debasing them yet more and more. But, with the exception of that utterly abandoned class which is to be found everywhere, there is a very considerable proportion of fallen women who have tasted the bitterness of their sin, and, *when properly treated*, give undoubted proof of sincere repentance and reform.

"From the very first, when this abomination was but suggested, I declared against it ; chiefly for the reason that with law, or without it, keepers of public-houses and of brothels would, for their own profit, desire the system of 'inspection ;' and that,

what with the licentiousness already existing, and *the facility for sinful indulgence afforded by such a measure*, unchastity would soon cease to be regarded as a *sin*, and that gradually all the domestic evils of such countries as France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, would prey upon the masses of English society.

"This is now coming to pass, and if we are *too* cautious and slow in waking up the entire public, and letting them know in the War Office, the Admiralty, and the Home Office, that we do not mean Parliament itself to be stultified by having Acts made without full and fair debate, the same thing will be done early next Session.

"For my own part I think the sooner every one of us commits himself openly to the arrest of this evil the better. I have not been silent on proper occasions; but as the military and naval authorities, under successive Governments, have adopted a measure which tends to demoralize those whom they should protect, and as this has actually begun to demoralize the country, we must speak, or we shall be partakers of the crime!"

Under date, January 22nd, 1870, Dr. Rule again writes, with the object of showing that moral influence is superior to State provision for vice:—

"DURING the first half of the year 1859, and the close of the appointment of the Fifth Dragoon Guards to Manchester, I became acquainted with the regiment by correspondence, and was aware that a few inhabitants of the town had shown some attention to a portion of the men who attended, in due course, at their accustomed place of worship, and that they were thereby favourably influenced.

"From Manchester the regiment removed to Aldershot, and 135 non-commissioned officers and men were transferred to my care as the senior Wesleyan chaplain on that station. There were no civilians in Aldershot to supply the place of their Manchester friends, and therefore there was no beneficial influence outside the camp,—nothing to help them beyond what ought always to be at hand within every garrison.

"Our attention could not but be drawn to the usual plague of venereal disease; not that the Fifth Dragoon Guards was

troubled with it to an unusual degree—I should rather think the contrary; but the surgeon felt strongly on the subject, and, like a good officer, not only did his prescribed duty well, but made good use of his position to give his patients fatherly advice. For my own part, then, as always, for an obvious moral reason, I never passed by a venereal patient, but paid him special attention, and know that my assistant-chaplain did the same. I found there, as in all wards I ever visited, that by dealing with men as their friend and adviser, it was easy to engage their confidence, and often to elicit their warmest thanks.

“Those efforts were supported by the wisdom and kindness of the colonel, who was well sustained by the good feeling of both officers and men, and not least by an excellent regimental serjeant-major. A few who fancied that they needed some further help to get rid of intemperate habits, asked me to set up a temperance society, which was done, with the colonel’s sanction, within the regiment. About a hundred signed the pledge. A coffee and reading-room was established for the whole regiment, and everything that could tend to promote the common comfort and welfare was encouraged.

“It was on the first day of January, 1860, that the colonel to whom I now refer came to the regiment, and on the morrow first went into the orderly-room to enter on the ordinary duties of his command. To his surprise he found ‘*no crime!*’ As yet there was no temperance society, but drunkenness was so far diminished that *offences had become rare*. Moral restraint already so far prevailed that among my own men there were *few or no cases of syphilis*, and not many among the others.

“I regret to know that after the regiment was removed to Brighton, the sanitary condition of its members deteriorated in this respect, in consequence of increased exposure in the town, and some unfavourable changes of circumstance; but the Fifth Dragoon Guards had given abundant proof of *the power of moral influence*.

“I mention this example, not because it stands alone, but because I was enabled to trace more distinctly than usual the relation between cause and effect, and after eight years’ experience at Aldershot, and frequent opportunities of observation for many years (since 1826) over a much wider field, I am perfectly convinced that *such influence is never ineffectual*, that

sensual indulgence is *not a necessity*, that reason and self-respect when sustained by *conscience* will keep men, except, perhaps, when overtaken by some sudden and rare surprise, from falling into evil. But I must observe that even the highest sanctions of religion, to which I always must appeal, have to be surrounded by something far more potent than recreations and artificial preventions. To provide facility for illicit intercourse with some kind of warrant, even if warrant could be given, of exemption from disease, would only confirm the evil habit, and degrade the man for life, *with certainty of eventual suffering.*"

ROBERT CHARLETON'S TESTIMONY.

ROBERT CHARLETON, of Bristol, a Minister of the Gospel in the Society of Friends, writes as follows to the Editor of the *Western Daily Press* (Oct. 18, 1869):

"RESPECTED FRIEND,—Before the discussion of this painful but very important subject is entirely closed, may I be allowed briefly to notice some of the statements in Berkeley Hill's letter to the *Daily Press* a few days ago. But, before doing so, let me say that I give full credit to that gentleman, and those with whom he is acting, for the motives by which they are influenced. I agree with them that the disease with which they are seeking to grapple is so malignant in its nature, and so widespread in its ravages, as to demand the earnest attention of all thoughtful men, with the view of providing a remedy. But I no less firmly believe that the application of the Contagious Diseases Act to the civil population would not only fail to be an adequate remedy, but would be the means of introducing moral evils of so disastrous a character as to make the remedy much worse than the disease.

"But to return to Berkeley Hill's letter—with the view of showing that the fear of contagion is no 'deterrent' of any practical value, he says that he 'never met with such an instance.' This I can easily believe, for the only cases likely to come under a surgeon's notice are those in which this 'deterrent' has proved unavailing. But let us look on the subject practically. It is extensively known that by indulgence in a

certain sin, a man will expose himself to the peril of contracting a loathsome and infamous disease. Now, to say that the fear of incurring this dreadful penalty is no deterrent of any real value, is to deny the existence of the principle appealed to in all those warnings, whether human or Divine, which threaten suffering as the penal consequence of sin. I do not say that the fear of suffering is the *only*, or the *chief*, deterrent from its commission—*partly* by moral considerations, and *partly* by the fear of consequences. Now the operation of the 'Contagious Diseases Act' will weaken the force of BOTH of these restraining influences; for whilst it will smooth the path of the fornicator by lessening the fear of disease, it will be felt to palliate, if not to justify, his sin by throwing over it the shield of official regulation.

"Another remark of Berkeley Hill is that 'where the Act is in force the women cease public solicitations in the streets.' Now, as the Act nowhere forbids such solicitations, excepting by *diseased* women, the fair inference from B. Hill's statement is that, where the Act is in force, the women receive such an increase of *unsolicited* custom at their lodgings as to make it needless for them to solicit in the streets. In the forcible language of Bishop Alford, 'the harlot's houses are crowded.' To such an excess, indeed, has this 'crowding' been carried in one of the places where the Act has been in force, that the revolting filthy details might well have been deemed incredible, if the hideous tale had been told by a witness of less authority than the medical officer at the station referred to.

"The proposed extension of this Act would introduce among the civil population of this country a system differing in little more than name from the French plan of licensed prostitution, and would inevitably lower the tone of moral feeling in England to a standard which we have hitherto professed to regard with abhorrence. But apart from such considerations, I would appeal to the *manly* feelings of my fellow-countrymen, and call their attention to the *cowardice*, no less than to the flagrant injustice of a law which allows the *male* offender to pursue his course without molestation, and reserves all its penalties for the *weaker sex*; which leaves the adulterer, the fornicator, the debauchee, in the unrebuked indulgence of his brutal lust, whilst on the *victim* of that lust it heaps all the horrible indignities

which lie concealed under the smoothly sounding term 'compulsory medical examination.'

"The subject ought to be taken up in earnest by the women of England. For their own sake, as well as that of the other sex, I would urge the solemn responsibility resting on them in the present momentous crisis. On the day after the Social Science discussion, a letter was addressed to my wife by a lady, whose name and family connections (were I at liberty to give them) would secure for her words the respectful attention of all readers of the *Daily Press*. In her letter she says:—'Will you kindly excuse me for troubling you with this note on the subject of that unholy measure which has so suddenly and startlingly been brought before the notice of every one? Women cannot discuss it, yet it is of the first importance that their feelings should be ascertained. May I ask you to tell your husband that you have had a letter from a lady, in which she begs you to thank him exceedingly for the part he took in the discussion—to say that every word he uttered embodied her own feelings—and that she prayed to God his efforts, and similar ones, might never flag in opposition to such a measure. Six ladies who have spoken to her on the subject have the same deep sense of horror and distress. She feels as though those who bear the brunt of the battle ought to have the strength of knowing with what sympathy their efforts are watched.'

"I have reached a period in life at which the fatigue and excitement involved in such a discussion as this are both burdensome and distasteful. But so overwhelming is my sense of the iniquitous character of the proposed measure, and of the disastrous results which must flow from it, that I am willing to forego all personal considerations, and whether by voice, pen, or moral influence, to do all that I can in support of the efforts which are now being made, and which through the Divine blessing will not, I trust, be made in vain, to avert from our beloved country the disgrace and the curse of the threatened legislation."

Medical Testimony.

DR. E. ACWORTH'S TESTIMONY.

DR. ACWORTH writes as follows to the Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act :—

“LADIES,

“I am a Physician, and so belong to a profession which, I grieve to say, has deeply wronged your sex by the part it has played in that smuggling transaction that culminated in the Contagious Diseases Act. To you, therefore, I owe my protest against it.

“But another reason there is for my addressing you. I am one of those who have been disposed to welcome the admission of women to the ranks of our profession,—to practice that part of it which I think is fitly theirs. Have I, however, been right in this? I ask this, because a medical lady has been recently writing in favour of an Act which I, as a man, find so infamously vile, that now I can hardly help asking myself the question—whether the practice of our profession may not tend to crush the finer instincts of the woman—whether it may not deaden that nice sense that makes her intuitions more trustworthy than man's inductions ever are—whether, in short, it may not possibly unsex ! If so, I thank God there are so few of you amongst us !

“Another reason why I write to you is this. Because it is to you, the Women of England, that we must look for the abolition of this ghastly act ; for our coming salvation from hideous sin and shame. Journalists, supposed to have our liberties in trust and to be the advocates of justice and of truth, will only hear one side of the question, and that side is not *yours* ! Clergymen, who ought to be the guardians of our morals, are wrangling and jangling with each other about straws—eloquent over ‘tithes of mint and cummin,’ but neglecting the ‘weightier matters of the law’—shall I add of that so clandestinely enacted ?

The Medical mind—the MERELY medical—that can no more judge of this great question than a mouse can judge of the gestation of an elephant, as Burke said of the Nisi Prius lawyer in regard to a great Constitutional one,—is enlisted in the cause of Medicine versus Morals, though Medicine, even if it gain the day, is sure to suffer defeat. For the Act is as stupidly inexpedient, even as regards the prevention of disease, as it is odiously cruel and unjust. I know something of the operation of such an Act in France! But let any really honest mind that would form a right conclusion on this subject only read the exhaustive article thereon in this month's (Jan.) 'Westminster Review.' After that, there is little need for me to add to the papers and pamphlets that have been already published. The object should be to disseminate these throughout the length and breadth of the land. Only let the subject be well ventilated, and there will be righteous men enough as well as women to be found to save us from the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, which we shall do our best or worst to merit, if we consent to live under a law that panders to all that is vilest in our nature! In the name of GOD I protest against it:

"As a MAN,—and as shocking all my notions of real manhood—because it is made by men *for* men and *against* their wretched victims, women, on whose behalf it should interpose to shield and not to outrage.

"As an ENGLISHMAN,—because I love liberty too well to rob an Englishwoman of her rights, and least of all that sacred one over her own person, which she no more forfeits by prostitution, alas! too often brought upon her! than the high-placed libertine forfeits his by defilement that comes of his own seeking: and because of two consenting parties to an act, it brands the weaker one with lasting infamy, and gives to the other who triumphs in his strength a 'ticket-of-leave' to traffic in debauchery without any fear or shame.

"As a PHYSICIAN,—because it is inexpedient; because it is only *whitening the sepulchre*; because reliable statistics prove that the remedy is worse than the disease, which (grossly exaggerated for a purpose), if lessened amongst the Licentiates of vice, is largely increased amongst the *unlicensed* by that clandestine prostitution which in every way it promotes; and because I know, as Physicians ought to know, that physical evils result

from moral causes, for which this Act can never be the cure ; and lastly

“ As a CHRISTIAN,—because it is opposed to the whole spirit of Christ, who teaches the poor harlot to “go and sin no more,” and tells us that even such as she shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven before her Pharisaical oppressors, who would give the right of stoning her to those who so very far from being ‘without sin,’ would sin not only *with* her but *against* her !

REMARKS OF JOHN CHAPMAN, M.D., M.R.C.P., M.R.C.S.

Dr. Chapman, Physician to the Farringdon Dispensary, writes as follows in *The Medical Mirror* for February 1st, 1870 :—

“ Much has been said about the right of the State in this matter, and gentlemen argue, as Dr. Letheby has done, that one form of State interference justifies another. I object to the use of the word ‘right,’ as liable to lead to confusion in relation to the question. Properly speaking, the right of the State is the right to do those things which experience, or, in the absence of experience, analogical argument proves expedient to be done. But ample experience, carefully recorded and justly interpreted, is completely condemnatory of both the principle and the application of the Contagious Diseases Acts. I have carefully studied the history and results of the systems of legal control and sanitary superintendence of prostitution adopted in several continental cities, and have found that all the facts point in one direction and to one conclusion, viz., that as an expedient for lessening the amount and preventing the spread of syphilis that system is a total failure. Wherever it has been applied, the utmost that it has achieved is the subjection of a small fraction of the prostitute population to sanitary control, whereas, meanwhile, the great majority of prostitutes resort to secret prostitution in defiance and beyond the reach of the police. Thus induced to conceal themselves, they choose, when infected with syphilis, what they deem a less evil than subjection to the police—namely, the effects of that disease—and rather suffer those

effects than incur the risk of arrest by applying for medical relief. The consequence is, that among clandestine prostitutes—those of Paris, for example—syphilis is extremely prevalent, and is increasing. Of the 1550 clandestine prostitutes (the average number) now arrested in Paris every year, 1 in 4 is found syphilitic, whereas from 1850 to 1854 the proportion syphilitic was 1 in 5, and from 1845 to 1849 the proportion syphilitic was 1 in 6. Thus, in the course of a few years, the proportion of clandestine prostitutes in Paris afflicted with syphilis has increased from $16\frac{3}{4}$ to 25 per cent. Prostitutes resist registration so resolutely that though, according to a moderate and authoritative computation, there are 30,000 of them in Paris, only 3850 are registered, and under sanitary control. If the number now under control were as great in proportion to the population as it was in 1820, there would be 7000 registered prostitutes in Paris; but while the proportionate (and recently the actual) number of those registered is lessening, while the number of brothels is lessening, and while the number of girls living in them is lessening, the number of clandestine prostitutes whom even the Paris police cannot touch is steadily and enormously increasing, so that, as M. Lefort, Surgeon to the Hôpital du Midi, has recently stated, Paris has become the brothel of Europe. Simultaneously with the progress of this degenerative transformation, the recognition and establishment of prostitution as an indispensable element of civilisation have caused the social life of Paris to become more and more profoundly contaminated with sexual vice: the tides of immorality and dissoluteness have steadily risen, and have spread themselves through increasingly wider areas of domestic life. The most thoughtful men in Paris are appalled by the vast development of profligacy around them; and experienced men like M. Lefort, who dream of no remedy except that which may be applied by the forcible agency of Government, suggest that the only means of combating the evil with a chance of success is the appointment of a body of police sufficiently large to control 50,000 women, the compulsory residence of all the prostitutes of Paris in brothels—all women leaving them without permission being punished by imprisonment when recaptured, the appointment of a medical staff sufficiently large to examine all the women in these brothels twice a week, and, finally, the con-

demnation of young girls (minors), after detection in the act of prostitution three times, to enforced residence in brothels as regular prostitutes—their parents' reclamation of them notwithstanding. Such is the final goal to which the system of Governmental control of prostitution in a large city inevitably tends, and the greater the city the stronger this tendency. What hope, then, is there of applying this system or any similar one to London?

DR. TAYLOR'S TESTIMONY.

The following is an abstract of a paper on the Contagious Diseases Acts, read before the Medical Society of London, on Monday evening, January 17th, 1870, by Dr. Taylor, F.R.C.S., late President of the Parisian Medical Society, as reported in *The Medical Mirror*:

The author commenced his paper by remarking that, in consequence of certain alarmist doctrines respecting the extent and malignancy of venereal diseases, Government had been induced, towards the close of the Session of 1864, to pass a Bill entitled "The Contagious Diseases Act." By this Act women suspected to have communicated disease were liable to arrest and incarceration. The Editor of the *British Medical Journal* denounced the law as one that sanctions the grossest violation of the liberty of the subject that had ever been proposed to a British Parliament. In 1866 a still more stringent Bill was passed—one, in fact, which introduced the Continental system of legalised prostitution, and enforced periodical examinations upon healthy women suspected by policemen to be prostitutes. In 1869, without a word of discussion in Parliament, during the last four days of the Session, in the absence of senators, without cognizance of the constituencies, and almost without the knowledge of Members of Parliament (one honourable member distinctly stating that nineteen-twentieths of the members had never seen the Bill or heard of it), the same secret tactics resulted in the hurried sanction of a still more tyrannical measure—one which includes five more towns; the

radius, too, was increased from five miles to fifteen. Thus, eighteen districts, each about ninety miles in circumference, have been subjected to a police despotism of the worst kind, such as is barely tolerated, which, in fact, is even now creating a quiet rebellion in third-rate Continental cities.

Dr. Taylor remarked that, even in Imperial France, the Senate had never dared to legalise such arbitrary and unequal laws, and complained bitterly of the secrecy with which more than one half of the population, throughout an immense area, had been shorn of rights older than Parliament, deprived of Habeas Corpus and jury trial, and cast hopelessly at the mercy of police spies. He showed that Dr. Row, of the Devonport Hospital, had denounced the Act as containing powers such as were not to be found in any other Act in the world; and that Mr. Swain, who was in favour of such measures at the Bristol meeting, stated at Devonport that it was a "mere police Act," opened the door wide to great abuse of police power, and invested one man with the attributes of judge, jury, jailor, and prosecutor.

Dr. Taylor stated that the Act defined a superintendent of police to mean an inspector of police, but did not define a prostitute at all. The inspector has only to state that he thinks something in order to obtain a warrant for any woman's apprehension, who would be required to prove her innocence against the policeman's suspicions. On what principle of English law is the burden of proof thrown upon the helpless accused, instead of the paid accuser? The law placed decent women at the mercy of bawds, brothel-keepers, anonymous letter writers, and abandoned women; that it was idle to pretend that it was only the superintendent who had power in the matter, who would derive his information entirely from the spies, mouchards, and women-hunters, who henceforth, in virtue of this enactment, are to hold the happiness, reputation, and free agency of English women in their hands. The spies in France prowled about the streets, arresting women about whom they knew nothing. Of course they believed nothing the women said, but hurried them off to the police-office. About eighty in twenty-four hours were thus arrested for the crime of being out of doors.

MR. HOLMES COOTE'S TESTIMONY.

Mr. COOTE writes as follows to *The Medical Mirror* :

"SIR,—I see with satisfaction that public attention is again becoming directed towards the working of the Contagious Diseases Act. I fear that those who, with the best intentions, forwarded this Act passing into law will feel disappointment in the results which it has achieved. The local improvements, which it has been supposed to effect, have been attained by means which, it would appear, will be unstable and insufficient, unless the provisions of the Act be extended to the civil population generally. In other words, unless we should subject the whole system of prostitution to a street police supervision, similar to that which exists in Continental nations.

"Against such a system I, for one, offer an earnest protest. It presses hardly and unjustly on the woman, and tends yet further to demoralise and degrade her. It punishes her, and spares the man, who is very often the more deserving of punishment. It fosters a system of clandestine prostitution, more dangerous than that which is avowed; and last, but not least, it has been proved wholly inefficacious in every country and in every epoch when it has been tried.

"Had I any lingering desire for State intervention in these matters it would have been utterly extinguished by the perusal of a most masterly and deeply interesting paper in the *Westminster Review*, January, 1870, entitled, 'Prostitution: Government Experiments in Controlling it.' I read therein but one result under every form of Government and in every climate—namely, 'failure.'

"I wish that society should act more generously towards these unfortunate women; and try rather to raise than to degrade. I hope to see hospitals established, where without shame or exposure they may be cured of their disease, and then, if it be their desire, put into some respectable calling. Kindly influences might be brought to bear upon them, while those who undertook such duties should ever bear in mind one golden rule—namely, to hear the story of the temptation and the fall, before at once beginning to condemn."